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ABSTRACT

Adult and continuing education developed as ad hoc responses to concrete and partial needs. The fact that adult education has gained a broader mission and become regarded as encompassing political and citizenship education, vocational training, general adult education and access courses, and leisure courses presents an ambiguous challenge to the field. The dichotomy between work and leisure seems to be fading within the subjective horizon of adult learners. Adult education and learning must pay attention to a broader subjective context, related to the entire life world, and integrate areas of learning that have hitherto been regarded as separate from or antagonistic to one another. Adult education thinking and the adult education policy agenda must undergo the following discursive shifts: (1) a shift from emphasis on securing access to emphasis on multiple target groups; (2) a shift from focus on education to focus on learning environments; (3) a shift from the view that culture is leisure to the view that work is culture; (4) a shift from focus on citizenship to focus on collective experience; and (5) a shift from a focus on political education to a focus on the tenet that knowledge is political. (MN)

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Henning Salling Olesen:

Work and leisure - a fading dichotomy?

To facilitate understanding my oral presentation had a very simple line of argument, which has been maintained in this written version:

The Challenge
The Chance
The Change(s): (1)Wage Labour and Gender
The Change(s): (2) Knowledge and Democracy
The Consequences

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The challenge:

In order to understand what takes place inside education you have to look outside. Adult and continuing education developed as ad hoc responses to concrete and partial needs, and may today appear as (a bundle of) sector(s) related functionally to specific social needs: Political education developed as a class political articulation and formation of modern political democracies, now education for citizenship - Vocational training for the industrial and labour market changes - General adult education and access courses for the mobilization of broader segments of the population for higher education - Leisure courses as a part of recent mass culture of leisure, etc. The modernization process has functionalized adult education and learning needs have been shaped in accordance with the basic format of wage labour. The question in my headline owes it's importance to this background.

The fact that Adult Education has gained a new and broader become regarded a solution to not only political education and social integration, but also leisure culture and last, increasingly not least, for economic growth, present an ambiguous challenge to the field: Political importance and financial resources, but also expectations that can hardly be met by education.

As a remedy for specific social problems within each of these domains educational responses are bound to fail, because most of them are embedded in more fundamental and comprehensive contradictions of highly developed capitalism: The cultural erosion (Negt) or corrosion of character (Sennet), the problems of sustainable and just growth, increasing inequality, the cointradiction between democracy and expert society, and more. Adult Education can not solve real problems alone. Education and learning are necessary but not sufficient.

A failure of social engineering and the emancipatory expectations of modernity, or a critical and utopian opening of the modernization process? Very few of the real problems can be solved *without* comprehensive learning processes. This is the real challenge for adult education. This challenge calls for ideas that are also inherent in the modernization process, but have been 'compartmentalized' away in the functional specialization of adult and continuing education. We have to go back to the founding questions about motives for learning, and rephrase the basic rationales of educational policies.

The Chance:

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Research and development work exploring the interrelation between new societal functions of education, and the subjective perspective on learning of the learners provides evidence that subjective learning needs go far beyond formal education and official goals. May be the most important has to do with the dichotomy between work and leisure.

I shall give a couple of examples that Adult and continuing Education can make a difference. This 'surplus' of experience and interest in learning, which is historically produced during the modernization process, may transform the issues of social engineering into shared problems and collective learning. This is the real chance that adult education may contribute to democratization and self regulation of life in the 'late modern era'.

To take this chance we have to understand the basic change processes in which adult education is assigned a role, and to see how historical dynamic of these changes depend on learning proceses. My examples are meant to illustrate this in relation to the dichotomy of work and leisure, or more generally: the compartmentalization of experience and learning.

Changes(1): Wage Labour and Gender

A case summary from an evaluation research project[i]

The P 47 was from the beginning an equal opportunity project, following a number of guidance and training projects that had been specially designed for women in the preceding years. Setting up a systematized experiment, aiming on large-scale implementation, was an integral part of labour market policy....

The first and basic condition, that has made these experiences interesting in a wider context, is the fact that the programme was successful on the very basic criterion of employment...[In a setting of high unemployment rates] such re-integration projects face very hard conditions. Until now the rates of direct employment has been very low....

The P 47 programme broke this pattern. The women did get a job at a much higher frequency than in other labour market training and employment schemes. Some 2/3 got a job within the first six months after completion, 1/4 had a continuous employment in that period. That is to say, a good proportion have changed their position in the labour market markedly. (...) It seems, that a good proportion of the women got jobs, that were better than "just a job" - and in this segment of the labour market this is an important achievement.

Since the education programme is set up on the background of unemployment this basic success is of course essential. Why has this programme been more successful than others?

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Only a very simplistic measurement of effectiveness would try to make a single explanation of the(se) figures. A complex of factors work together and against each other.

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The interesting thing, however, independent of which explanatory power you assign to each of these factors, the total outcome does support, that it is possible - under certain circumstances and with appropriate means - to break some of the mechanisms of the labour market segregation. So the question is: Is it possible to find out what are the key factors?

When we asked the employers the most striking was, how much they emphasized general qualifications, social competences and personal characteristics. The technical skills are basic and necessary, but when the employers evaluated the education as a whole, as well as when they gave reasons for appreciating an individual employee,

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[i] Slightly modified exctract from a previous paper, 'Qualifying Adult Women for Employment' for a seminar of an ESREAs research network (Adult Education and the Labour Market,. 1993. I have left out passages on research methodology and details on the education programme in question - these passages and a more full account can be seen in Klenovsek/Olesen (eds), 1994.

they turned to these types of reasons. Now, this is a highly interpretable type of data. To some extent they might rather be a mapping of employer ideologies than of the exact employment criteria. However, it suggests that there is a much closer connection and intertwining between the factors, that facilitates the women`s success on the labour market, and the factors that makes the education a valuable and engaging experience for the women themselves.

The subjective learning story

This leads into the focusing on the subjective level of the learning process, and the subjective level of the women`s labour market situation.

I shall comment in detail on the method later. But we utilized our deep interviews to go one step further into interpreting this subjective aspect.

.....

To give an idea about the analysis and its fertility would more or less demand one case plus all the reservations. But nevertheless...

One woman, who is during her transport work education not only improving self confidence, but also changing her ideas about possible work drastically, is also telling a lot of her relations to her husband and to her mother, giving enough material for some interpretation. Her mother, with whom she had been very closely connected also in adult age, died from cancer only a short time before she started. Her relation to other women and to her husband during the education is a kind of adolescent development - she gradually becomes able to face her husband as an equal partner, and the education and work competence goes into that process, and she also gradually learns the possibility of women-to-women-communication outside her daughter-relation to the mother. This is not only a "private" development. It is intertwined with the development of her work identity and of her concepts of work. During the education she has two very different trainee experiences. One being a trucker - that really is "something" to impress her husband and her little son. A new social identity. The other one is a very calm and family-like work group in a store.

We interpret her reactions to these trainee experiences in relation to her previous work experiences. She has had a happy experience of being a maid in a private home - were she felt appreciated and integrated. However, this is not really conceived to be work. After that she has had one of the trivial women labour market careers, with unskilled jobs in industry, part time cleaning a school while her child was small, etc. The trucker experience corresponds her concept of real labour, and also her newly strengthened self confidence. The store experience calls for her family and relational experiences - this is obvious - but we also think that it contributes to a concept of work, that includes such experiences as those of the maid period into a new consciousness of how work environments may be - that is to say a reconciliation of some of the relational experiences and needs with the emancipation process of becoming qualified labour - She ends up heading for the store, and is employed in it. It is not possible on this level to discuss the individual psychodynamic process -f.i. the relations between regressive and progressive elements in the story - but if the learning history of the individual may be understood and interpreted in the context of individual socialisation and life history, it adds new dimensions to the possible meanings of the present actions, plans and learning proces.

The point is not to be able to know the exact truth about this or the other individual woman, but to provide a new context of understanding learning processes. The essential point is that the key element in something which seemed to be a relative succes in a capitalist labour market was the inclusion of the women' s own experience. This represents a close nexus with the very same modernization, that demands a standardized and easily recycled labour force. This course is meant to adapt a group of marginalized women to this labour market. For the women the process represents both a progression in personal identity and a historical progress to be able to cope with the labour market. It presupposes the social liberation of women and the fact that this course directly built on the collective experience of women's movement for processing the ambivalences, which follow from the double work of women and the position at the boundary of the labour market. The subjective significance of the work - wage labour or a secondary breadwinner - are closely related to gender identity (a good worker and a good mother) and personal development (gaining the necessary tolerance of ambivalence). The traditional female domain does not represent an alternative to coping with the labour market

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and it's qualification demands, although it may seen as the opposite domain - in this case it also represented or produced a ressource.

Changes (2): Knowledge and Democracy

I would like to bring in another example from an entirely different context, dealing with professional knowledge, because it presents to us in condensed form the mediation between objective societal and subjective aspects of knowledge.[ii]

I have previously studied learning in work life, adult education in relation to work, and vocational training - covering studies into subjective aspects of vocational training, unemployment training, trade union education etc: How are changes and structural contradictions in work subjectively recognized, and how do they influence learning in work life. Lately I have especially studied work domains that you might term professional or semi-professional: Engineers, social workers, nurses, pedagogues, police. It represents an empirical supplement... .....[and at the same time it may be seen] as a spearhead of a general development. The demand for a lifelong qualifying process for work will include an ever growing demand for/enabling of personal development in the form of a subjective involvement and taking responsibility, at the same time as work will rely ever more on specialized competencies and societal division of labour. More and more people may become professionals and semi-professionals in the double sense of being knowledge based and subjectively involved in their role within the division of labour. At the same time, however, the relation between knowledge and subjectivity, is becoming more delicate. In the classical professionalization the individual subjectivity is more or less entirely integrated in a professional identity, based on unquestioned expertise, and often connected with a great but well defined power. If the trinity of expert status, knowledge, and subjective involvement on the one hand has been spread to a larger part of the population, then the relation within the trinity on the other hand becomes more multiple and fluid.

The political perspective seems obvious. Knowledge and competencies form a societal resource and power base. We are all involved in ever more differentiated division of labour, and we are all dependant on experts and the expertise of others in ever more aspects of life. The challenge to us as adult educators is to rephrase the central ideas about political education and democratisation, so that they catch up this potential for politicization of work life - and additionally to catch up the problems of equity and solidarity which are aggravated by this development.

Catchwords like 'the Knowledge Society' and 'Expert Society' make reifications of knowledge and knowing people with each a specific connotation. 'Reflexivity' generalizes knowing as a quality of the social, and thereby tends to dissolve it from concrete historical processes and persons. If reflexivity shall be a category for democratic consciousness and self regulation it presupposes a politicization of the way knowledge is produced and circulated in society. To examine 'professionalization' is a way of studying the effects on individuals of trends in work and in society at large - but at the same time a possible point of departure for subjectivity in a historically relevant sense, anchored in collective learning processes.

The potentials for democratization - or the possibility that learning may form the ground for a new rationality - under all circumstances demand a comprehensively revised understanding of the role of knowledge in society, or the 'ontology of knowledge', to substitute a normative and slightly naive epistemology.....

In a couple of specific research projects with slightly different aims we have collected a comprehensive empirical material - partly a number of life history interviews, partly a background knowledge about the development within the corresponding work domains. One project dealt with the labour market of engineering, and with engineers' subjective recognition of their lives, their educational and job career, and their life perspectives.. Another project dealt with continuing education within a number of white collar and semiprofessional work domains, preferably human services....These interviews exposed a close interrelation between professional learning and personal development.... [iii].

[ii] Extracted from Salling Olesen, 2000 - comments as in note 1

[iii] This research is part of the 'Life History Project', supported by the Danish Research Councils. The empirical data were collected with support from FTF, the Danish Confederation of White Collar workers and Civil Servants. Most interviews and the first steps of the analysis were made by Mette Vestergaard Hansen in collaboration with Henning Salling Olesen. Some interview persons are

[An individual case] ....

Vibeke is married, 39 years, and has two children (3/7 years). She has a strong identification with her profession - she 'thinks as a teacher all the time'. What ever she experiences and sees, is considered as a potential contribution to her teaching. As a teacher she has an engagement far beyond normal work hours. And, as she thinks, in teaching you are always working with your entire personality - it is difficult to see yourself as wage labour.

She gives glimpses of a childhood experience with her father who was a 'literate worker' and who has strongly influenced her curiosity and interest into learning. She has internalized this attitude as a part of a general attitude. To be a teacher is a part of Vibeke's personal identity, and she has been very devoted to the profession ever since she finished studying. She has been working most of the time in a private school with a quite high ambition and responsibility.

Working conditions for teachers have changed quite a bit during the latest few years, she feels. New regulations of duties, more detailed than previous ones, have influenced notably in everyday life in the school. This way of counting the minutes does not comply with Vibeke's conception of an involved teacher, because she thinks it strangles the involvement and initiative from the side of the teachers. Also a change in the educational tasks has taken place, influencing the working conditions. The mission of the school today is comprehensive, it is expected to manage all the problems of the pupils, at the same time as the proportion of 'problematic kids' is inclining. The result is a reduction in time for what Vibeke sees as the core of teaching, the solid teaching of school subjects. Altogether it has influence her experience of work conditions, which now seem to be uncertain and contradictory to her professional identity. The structural requirements towards the work cannot comply with her professional identity, and the job satisfaction is severely reduced.

Vibeke has always devoted much energy to her work, but as she raised a family with husband and children she began to prioritize family life. It has become more difficult to identify with the role as a teacher to the same degree as before. The dilemma also appears to Vibeke to be partly gendered - as children arrive one of the partners will have to reduce professional and educational activities for some years, and most often the woman will do that.

Vibeke sees now in a situation where working conditions as well as her own life course imply a shift in her professional ambition. A high level of professionalism is difficult to maintain during a whole life, and Vibeke is facing a shift where her professional orientation is influenced by other circumstances, that seems to drive her in the direction of a more wage labour like orientation - in spite of her feeling of a high degree of identification with the profession.

We cannot know how her professional life would have developed had she not had her children now - may be she has already earlier in her career encountered equally big difficulties, but handled them or tolerated them because she was not in a position to chose the children - or may be she would at that time have changed job in stead of resigning a little bit, as now.

The subjective dynamic in this work identification is certainly strong. The positive image of 'the good teacher' is nourished from her memory of a childhood with a father - a memory which qualifies the professional identity into an autonomous self expression.

....

Now, again the point is not to find out about the individual life history, but to understand subjective meaning of professional knowledge and the subjective dynamics of learning (better) at the same time as the implications of the learning are kept clear: Human services - care, teaching etc - are societalized forms of filling basic needs, as well as of the knowledge and skills necessary to do so. It is by definition a political work domain: It implies the handling of vital interests and social relations between people, and it necessitates the engagement of each involved person. What comes out of this depends extremely on their learning processes. The way professionals do away with their everyday life work experiences

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portrayed in Salling Olesen et.al. 1998

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and shaping their individual and collective professional identity bring together division of labour and conditions of democracy. I have been focussing on the learning of professionals, but in fact also the learning of the clients/users is of significant importance. Democracy and Self regulation in a knowledge or expert society is dependant on the contents of and the mode of sharing knowledge.

It is already mentioned that professional learning and personal development is closely knitted together for the professionals. This is not just a disturbing fact in relation to the functional needs in a professionalized division of labour - the personal experiences of every day life may in turn also be a resource. Of course the mixing up of individual and personal experiences with professional knowledge may often be disturbing or even destroying the professional work. But this is the point of departure, the case of professionals only expose it clearly. In jobs that presuppose subjective involvement, like most of the professions here talked about, the ability to change perspective and to develop a dialogic and reciprocal relation to clients/users becomes crucial to overcome (unnecessary) dependency and to improve quality in the professional work. It only demands learning processes exactly on meaning of work in personal identity and vice versa.

The Consequences:

The dichotomy between work and leisure seems to be fading within the subjective horizon of adult learners if it is not reproduced institutionally and ideologically. Rather than the decline in the subjective meaning of work - which would be claimed by some parts of the adult education field - or the prevailing of work and economy over the subjective interest in learning processes and education - which others might feel overwhelmingly true - the subjective horizon and the learning motives seem to transcend the boundaries between each life sphere and domain rationale.

As a consequence Adult education and learning must pay attention to a broader subjective context, relate to the entire life world, and integrate learning that has hitherto been regarded separate or antagonistic.

At this occassion I will finally try to sum up some consequences for adult education thinking and policy agenda in a few discursive shifts - pretending only to be signals of a new emphasis and context. Each line in the following diagram indicates a discursive consequence that needs to be taken:

OH projection

SECURING ACCESS	**→ MULTIPLE TARGET GROUP**
EDUCATION	**→ LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**
CULTURE IS LEISURE	**→ WORK IS CULTURE**
CITIZENSHIP	**→ COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE**
POLITICAL EDUCATION	**→ KNOWLEDGE IS POLITICAL**

Notes

Referencer:

Klenovsek, T./ Salling Olesen, H. (eds), (1994): *Adult Education and the Labour Market*, Ljubljana, ESREA and SAEC

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Further references and information on research background: http://www.educ.ruc.dk/staff/hso.html

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